

Message Text

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 01677 171333Z

44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

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CINCLANT

USMISSION NATO

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AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 1677

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MARR IC NATO OVIP (UNDERSEC SISCO AND CNO ADMIRAL
HOLLOWAY)

SUBJECT: VISIT TO ICELAND OF UNDERSEC SISCO AND CNO HOLLOWAY:
AN ASSESSMENT

REF: REYKJAVIK 1435 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: IT WILL BE A LONG TIME BEFORE ICELAND FORGETS UNDERSEC
SISCO AND CNO ADMIRAL HOLLOWAY. THEIR VISIT DEC 8-11 WAS AN
OUTSTANDING SUCCESS. PRESS COVERAGE WAS MORE EXTENSIVE AND MORE
FAVORABLE THAN FOR ANY FOREIGN VISITORS TO ICELAND IN RECENT YEARS.
A BELATED AND FEEBLE ATTEMPT BY THE COMMUNIST PRESS TO BLUNT
THIS IMPACT FIZZLED. GOVT AND POLITICAL LEADERS HAILED THE VISIT
AS THE REESTABLISHMENT OF A FOUNDATION FOR RENEWED CREDIBILITY
AND RESPECT FOR USG LEADERS AND FOR USG FOREIGN POLICY, AND
FELT IT WOULD LEAD TO CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE U.S.

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PAGE 02 REYKJA 01677 171333Z

AND ICELAND IN DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE OBVIOUS TEAMWORK

SHOWN BY THE UNDERSEC AND THE CNO DEMONSTRATED, TOO, THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF POLITICAL AND MILITARY FACTORS IN THE PROCESS OF DETENTE. THE VISITORS AWAKENED SUCH GOOD FEELING AND WARMTH OF RELATIONSHIP FOR AMERICA THAT THE LARGEST DAILY IN ICELAND EDITORIALIZED "THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT A PARALLEL EXISTS IN THE COOPERATION OF A SMALL STATE WITH A GREAT POWER," AND REMINDED ICELANDERS OF THE MUTUALITY OF INTERESTS THAT BIND ICELAND AND THE U.S. TOGETHER. IN ADDITION TO THE LONG-TERM BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF THE VISIT, IT SET AN IMMEDIATE FRIENDLY FRAMEWORK FOR THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH COMMENCE HERE THIS WEEK ON THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF THE NEW U.S.-ICELAND DEFENSE UNDERSTANDING. END SUMMARY.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ENCOURAGED ABOUT THE FUTURE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ICELAND AND THE U.S. HE TOLD ME THE VISIT WENT BEYOND EXPECTATION IN FULFILLING THE OBJECTIVES SET FORTH IN REFTEL. WE HAVE ALREADY HAD OUR FIRST DISCUSSION ON HOW WE COULD BUILD ON THE VISIT'S IMPACT SO AS TO SOLIDIFY RETENTION OF THE IDF AND BUILD TOWARD CLOSER COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. IN WORLD AFFAIRS.

3. THE FOREIGN MINISTER WAS SO PLEASED WITH THE VISIT, THAT IN HIS TOAST TO THE VISITORS AT THE GOVT DINNER IN THEIR HONOR, HE UNCHARACTERISTICALLY COMPLIMENTED THE NAVY FOR ITS STEWARDSHIP OF THE KEFLAVIK BASE. HE ALSO PRAISED THE RECENT DEFENSE AGREEMENT AS "TANGIBLE PROOF AGAIN THAT OUR SMALL NATION AND ONE OF THE GREATEST POWERS OF THE WORLD, FROM THE BEGINNING OF OUR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO TALK AND NEGOTIATE WITH EACH OTHER AS EQUAL PARTNERS."

4. THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND TOLD ME THAT THE VISIT CAME AT A TIME OF GREATEST MUTUAL BENEFIT TO OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND "WAS GREATLY NEEDED." HE PRAISED UNDERSEC SISCO AND ADMIRAL HOLLOWAY FOR THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND ARTICULATENESS, AND FOR THE MESSAGE THEY BROUGHT TO ICELAND. HE PRAISED, ALSO, THE SPIRIT OF EQUALITY AND RESPECT THAT THE VISITORS SHOWED FOR ICELAND AND ICELANDERS. HE THANKED ME FOR GIVING HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR FROM "TWO SUCH DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN OFFICIALS" ABOUT USG MOTIVATIONS AND ACTIONS.

5. THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND CURRENT MINISTER OF JUSTICE
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PAGE 03 REYKJA 01677 171333Z

AND COMMERCE, OLAFUR JOHANNESSEN (WHO ALSO IS CHAIRMAN OF THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY), WAS AT FIRST NONCOMMITTAL ABOUT THE VISIT. AFTER MEETING AND TALKING WITH UNDERSEC SISCO AND ADMIRAL HOLLOWAY OFF AND ON OVER A TWO-DAY PERIOD, HE CHANGED HIS TUNE AND WAS ENTHUSIASTIC AND OPTIMISTIC.

6. ENTHUSIASTIC, TOO, WERE THE MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE (WITH EXCEPTION OF THE COMMUNIST MEMBER WHO GRUDGINGLY

REMARKED "IT WAS AN INTERESTING BRIEFING"). THE CHAIRMAN, THORARINN THORARINSSON, WHO WAS ALWAYS SKEPTICAL ABOUT USG MOTIVES TOWARD "UNDERDEVELOPED AND SMALL NATIONS," NOW FEELS LESS SURE THAT HE KNOWS ALL THE ANSWERS. A MAJOR BREAK-THROUGH MAY HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED HERE.

7. THE CAREER OFFICERS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY FEEL THAT THE VISIT SHOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR THEM TO MOVE ICELAND TOWARD MORE POSITIVE POSITIONS ON SIGNIFICANT ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS.

8. THE FRENCH, DANISH AND NORWEGIAN AMBASSADORS WHO CALLED ON ME FOR A BRIEFING AFTER THE VISIT LABELED IT A "PLUS" FOR NATO. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR, WHO ALSO CALLED ON ME, SHOWED SOME NERVOUSNESS OVER THE "DIPLOMATIC COUP" ACHIEVED BY THE USG AND ASKED THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND ME HOW IT WAS DONE.

9. THE SUPPORT GIVEN AN AMBASSADOR AND HIS STAFF BY UNDERSEC SISCO AND ADMIRAL HOLLOWAY COULD NOT HAVE BEEN GREATER. THEIR LOCAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS CANNOT HELP BUT MAKE OUR JOB IN ICELAND EASIER. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THEIR VISIT.
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